

10th-12th Grand Prize Winner –
Bennett Kieffer, Wasatch High
School

31st Annual Utah State of Education (USOE) Martin Luther King, Jr. Essay Contest Submission

Living Dr. King's Dream

In Martin Luther King Jr's quote, "Everyone has the power for greatness, not for fame but greatness, because greatness is determined by service", he reinforced the ideals of eliminating discrimination, building collective greatness, and serving others. This essay will primarily focus on what students can do to honor and respect the legacy Dr. King has left for us.

Discrimination has haunted our nation and our schools for decades. Through Dr. King's efforts our school systems have been reformed to protect individuals that are different than the majority. However, our efforts cannot stop here. If we seek to accomplish greatness we must create a personal mission to remove ourselves from our previously established prejudices and be genuinely kind to others. We must protect those who face persecution. The violence, hate, and jealousy that is so common in schools across the nation can be solved with a simple love for people. We often describe those who are considered popular, as being good *with* people. I offer a different challenge: be good *to* people. You may become famous for being good with people, but you will become great by being good to people. Being good to people breaks the insignificant barriers of race, gender, social status, and economic standing. In your life you can make a significant impact on the people around you based upon your desire and dedication to serve them. We must go out of our way to build up the people around us and contribute to the fight against discrimination.

One of Dr. King's major ideals was the belief that everyone has a right to freedom. We have integrated that vision in Utah's public education to secure and perpetuate freedom for everyone. The question is, "how does that impact you?" Everyone deserves the same chance of greatness. The service we render is not measured by the quantity of what we did, but rather the impact that it had. We can provide a meaningful contribution to our school and our communities. I urge all students to be more

involved in the decisions that are being made around them. Assign yourself. Take initiative past what you have been asked to do, and make sure that the opportunities you have are given to those who follow after you.

The legacy of Dr. King is not credited to the discussion of ideas. It is credited to the action placed through his ideas. To become great we must act. Act not in the name of receiving fame, but in the satisfaction of building your own greatness. By serving others you are serving yourself. I have taken this initiative to be more involved, to take advantage of all the opportunities available to me, and leave a positive impact on all those who I come into contact with. Dr. King had a dream. I have a dream. I have a dream that we can all become great. Our pathway to greatness is only limited by our desire to serve.